

Butte Mineyards  
Butte Vicinity  
Silver Bow County  
Montana

HAER No. MT-36

HAER  
MONT,  
47-BUT.V,  
1-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HAER  
MONT,  
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# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## BUTTE MINEYARDS MT-36

Date: 1864 to present

Location: Vicinity of Butte, Silver Bow County, Montana

Owner: Mineral rights in the Butte area were originally divided among dozens and dozens of small claims held, for the most part, by individuals. Consolidation of claims into the Anaconda Company took place in the period from 1884 to 1906; the entire area is now controlled by the Atlantic Richfield Company.

Engineer/  
Builder Most of the existing structures were constructed by the engineers of the Anaconda Company or of Atlantic Richfield.

Significance: Mining for gold began in Butte as early as 1864. This early boom was followed by a period of recession lasting from the late 1860s until 1874, when silver was discovered. Further expansion of mining activity occurred after the discovery of copper deposits in 1883. Copper rapidly became the primary product of the mines, and between 1884 and 1906, a series of lawsuits, take-overs, and mergers eventually consolidated mining activity under the the management of the Anaconda Company. This firm was eventually bought out by the Atlantic Richfield Corporation.

The history of mining on Butte Hill has been significant in that the development and utilization of many mining methods has occurred here (and in the related smelters at Anaconda [HAER No. MT-37] and Great Falls, Montana). These developments have improved efeciency, and allowed Butte to remain a competitor in the world metals market. Changes in mining methods have changed from the early overhead stoppiing methods, to block caving, to open pit mining, as the ore-body changed. For over 80 years, Butte Hill has remained one of the worlds largest and most productive underground mining districts.

Researchers are referred to Malone, Michael P., Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906, and to Corbett, Robert, "Changing Face of Mining in Butte," Speculator, Summer 1984, for the histori of mine consolidation and technological change.

Transmitted by: Monica E. Hawley, Historian, 1984

ADDENDUM TO  
BUTTE MINE YARDS  
Butte Vicinity  
Silver Bow County  
Montana

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